**The imperfect, future, and conditional tenses**

The imperfect tense

Like the perfect tense, the imperfect tense is used to refer to events that have happened in the past. The distinction between the tenses lies in whether the action has a clear start and end time, or if the action was completed. If it is not known or ambiguous, the action is incomplete, or ‘imperfect’.

The main uses of the imperfect tense are:

* To describe past states and situations (e.g. During Shakespeare’s time, acting was an exclusively male profession.)

* To describe what used to happen/recurring events that took place in the past (e.g. I used to work in a bank in Maidstone.)

**Regular *‘ER’* verb endings**

To demonstrate, the regular verb *‘jouer’* will be conjugated.

***Jouer*** *–* To play

I ***Je*** *jou****ais***

You (sing.) ***Tu*** *jou****ais***

He/She/It ***Il/Elle***  *jou****ait***

We ***Nous***  *jou****ions***

You (pl.) ***Vous*** *jou****iez***

They ***Ils*** *jou****aient***

**Regular *‘IR’* verb endings**

To demonstrate, the regular verb *‘finir’* will be conjugated.

***Finir*** *–* To finish

I ***Je*** *fin****issais***

You (sing.) ***Tu*** *fin****issais***

He/She/It ***Il/Elle***  *fin****issait***

We ***Nous***  *fin****issions***

You (pl.) ***Vous*** *fin****issiez***

They ***Ils*** *fin****issaient***

**Regular *‘RE’* verb endings**

To demonstrate, the regular verb *‘vendre’* will be conjugated.

***Vendre*** *–* To sell

I ***Je*** *vend****ais***

You (sing.) ***Tu*** *vend****ais***

He/She/It ***Il/Elle***  *vend****ait***

We ***Nous***  *vend****ions***

You (pl.) ***Vous*** *vend****iez***

They ***Ils*** *vend****aient***

Verbs which most commonly used in the imperfect are *‘****avoir***’, *‘****être***’ and *‘****faire****’*. Of course, these are irregular, but ones that are absolutely vital (as you know). So, here are a few examples of phrases in the imperfect that make use of these verbs.

*Quand* ***j’étais*** *petit, je jouais très bien du piano.*

When I was little, I played the piano very well.

*Pendant les années 1990, les gens* ***avaient*** *de meilleures chances de s’acheter une maison.*

During the 90s, people had a better chance of buying a house.

***Il faisait*** *beau le jour de notre mariage.*

The weather was good on the day of our marriage.

The future

As in English, the French future tense modifies verbs in two ways – one for saying **what** **will happen** (the future tense), and one for saying **what is going to happen** (the immediate future). The difference between the two languages appears when saying **what will happen**, as in French, verb endings are used to express this idea, rather than a word equivalent to ‘will’ in this instance. But, the verb ‘to go’ (‘*aller’)* plus an infinitiveis similarly used when saying **what is going to happen** in French.

The future tense

**Regular *‘ER’* verb endings**

To demonstrate, the regular verb *‘jouer’* will be conjugated.

***Jouer*** *–* To play

I ***Je*** *jou****erai*** (I will play)

You (sing.) ***Tu*** *jou****eras*** (You will play)

He/She/It ***Il/Elle***  *jou****era*** (He/She/It will play)

We ***Nous***  *jou****erons*** (We will play)

You (pl.) ***Vous*** *jou****erez*** (You will play)

They ***Ils*** *jou****eront*** (They will play)

**Regular *‘IR’* verb endings**

To demonstrate, the regular verb *‘finir’* will be conjugated.

***Finir*** *–* To finish

I ***Je*** *fin****irai*** (I will finish)

You (sing.) ***Tu*** *fin****iras*** (You will finish)

He/She/It ***Il/Elle***  *fin****ira*** (He/She/It will finish)

We ***Nous***  *fin****irons*** (We will finish)

You (pl.) ***Vous*** *fin****irez*** (You will finish)

They ***Ils*** *fin****iront*** (They will finish)

**Regular *‘RE’* verb endings**

To demonstrate, the regular verb *‘vendre’* will be conjugated.

***Vendre*** *–* To sell

I ***Je*** *vend****rai*** (I will sell)

You (sing.) ***Tu*** *vend****ras*** (You will sell)

He/She/It ***Il/Elle***  *vend****ra*** (He/She/It will sell)

We ***Nous***  *vend****rons*** (We will sell)

You (pl.) ***Vous*** *vend****rez*** (You will sell)

They ***Ils*** *vend****ront*** (They will sell)

The immediate future

**Regular *‘ER’* verb endings**

To demonstrate, the regular verb *‘jouer’* will be conjugated.

***Jouer*** *–* To play

I *Je* ***vais***  *jouer*

You (sing.) *Tu* ***vas*** *jouer*

He/She/It *Il/Elle* ***va*** *jouer*

We *Nous* ***allons*** *jouer*

You (pl.) *Vous* ***allez*** *jouer*

They *Ils* ***vont*** *jouer*

**Regular *‘IR’* verb endings**

To demonstrate, the regular verb *‘finir’* will be conjugated.

***Finir*** *–* To finish

I *Je* ***vais***  *finir*

You (sing.) *Tu* ***vas*** *finir*

He/She/It *Il/Elle* ***va*** *finir*

We *Nous* ***allons*** *finir*

You (pl.) *Vous* ***allez*** *finir*

They *Ils* ***vont*** *finir*

**Regular *‘RE’* verb endings**

To demonstrate, the regular verb *‘vendre’* will be conjugated.

***Vendre*** *–* To sell

I *Je* ***vais***  *vendre*

You (sing.) *Tu* ***vas*** *vendre*

He/She/It *Il/Elle* ***va*** *vendre*

We *Nous* ***allons*** *vendre*

You (pl.) *Vous* ***allez*** *vendre*

They *Ils* ***vont*** *vendre*

The conditional tense

The conditional in French is just as commonly as in English and can most simply be defined as the tense that expresses what ‘would happen’. For example – ‘If Man City signed Lionel Messi, **they would win** the Champions League.’ It can also be used when telling someone to do something, or when making a request. For example – ‘**Could** **you** stop poking me on Facebook, please?’ or **‘I’d like** a pineapple juice’.

**Regular *‘ER’* verb endings**

To demonstrate, the regular verb *‘jouer’* will be conjugated.

***Jouer*** *–* To play

I ***Je*** *jou****erais*** (I would play)

You (sing.) ***Tu*** *jou****erais*** (You would play)

He/She/It ***Il/Elle***  *jou****erait*** (He/She/It would play)

We ***Nous***  *jou****erions*** (We would play)

You (pl.) ***Vous*** *jou****eriez*** (You would play)

They ***Ils*** *jou****eraient*** (They would play)

**Regular *‘IR’* verb endings**

To demonstrate, the regular verb *‘finir’* will be conjugated.

***Finir*** *–* To finish

I ***Je*** *fin****irai*** (I would finish)

You (sing.) ***Tu*** *fin****iras*** (You would finish)

He/She/It ***Il/Elle***  *fin****ira*** (He/She/It would finish)

We ***Nous***  *fin****irons*** (We would finish)

You (pl.) ***Vous*** *fin****irez*** (You would finish)

They ***Ils*** *fin****iront*** (They would finish)

**Regular *‘RE’* verb endings**

To demonstrate, the regular verb *‘vendre’* will be conjugated.

***Vendre*** *–* To sell

I ***Je*** *vend****rai*** (I would sell)

You (sing.) ***Tu*** *vend****ras*** (You would sell)

He/She/It ***Il/Elle***  *vend****ra*** (He/She/It would sell)

We ***Nous***  *vend****rons*** (We would sell)

You (pl.) ***Vous*** *vend****rez*** (You would sell)

They ***Ils*** *vend****ront*** (They would sell)